

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently Amended) A medical probe for use with tissue, comprising:
an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end;
an operative element carried at the distal end of the elongate member; and
a ~~stabilizer~~ stabilizing shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, the shroud configured for applying a vacuum force to secure the operative element relative to the tissue.
2. (Currently Amended) The medical probe of claim 1, wherein the operative element comprises ~~an electrode for delivering ablation energy to the tissue for delivering ablation energy to the~~ a tissue ablation element.
3. (Currently Amended) The medical probe of claim 1, wherein the operative element comprises ~~an electrode for sensing signals from the~~ a tissue sensing element.
4. (Currently Amended) The medical probe of claim 1, wherein the operative element comprises an expandable-collapsible body ~~having an interior~~.
- 5-8. (Cancelled)
9. (Currently Amended) The medical probe of claim 1, wherein the ~~stabilizer~~ shroud is secured to the distal end of the elongate member.
10. (Currently Amended) The medical probe of claim 1, wherein the ~~stabilizer~~ shroud comprises a wall and one or more vacuum ports located on the wall.
11. (Currently Amended) The medical probe of claim 1, wherein the ~~stabilizer comprises a shroud disposed around the distal end of the elongate member~~ circumscribes an entirety of the operative element.

12. (Currently Amended) The medical probe of claim 14, wherein the shroud is composed of a material exhibiting a low electrical conductivity.

13. (Currently Amended) The medical probe of claim 14, wherein the shroud is pre-shaped to expand in the absence of a compressive force.

14-16. (Cancelled)

17. (Original) The medical probe of claim 11, wherein the operative element comprises an expandable-collapsible body, and the shroud has a first configuration when the expandable-collapsible body is inflated, and a second configuration when the expandable-collapsible body is deflated.

18-22. (Cancelled)

23. (Currently Amended) ~~The medical probe of claim 1, further comprising~~ A medical probe for use with tissue, comprising:

an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end;

an operative element carried at the distal end of the elongate member;

a sleeve sheath having a lumen through which the elongate member is slidably disposed;

~~wherein the;~~

a stabilizer is associated with the sleeve; and sheath, wherein the stabilizer is configured for applying a vacuum force to secure the operative element relative to the tissue.

24. (Original) The medical probe of claim 23, wherein the stabilizer is secured to the sheath.

25. (Currently Amended) A method of performing a medical procedure on a patient using a medical probe having an operative element and a shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, comprising:

introducing a the medical probe ~~having an operative element~~ within the patient; to place the operative element being adjacent a target tissue site;

applying a vacuum force ~~between the medical probe and the target tissue~~ to the shroud to secure the operative element relative to the target tissue site; and

operating the operative element to perform the medical procedure on the target tissue site while the operative element is secured relative to the target tissue site.

26. (Cancelled)

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26 25, wherein the ~~electrode is an ablation electrode, and the operating~~ comprises delivering ablation energy to the ~~ablation electrode~~ operative element to ablate the target tissue site.

28. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26 25, wherein the ~~electrode is a mapping electrode, and the operating~~ comprises ~~using the mapping electrode to sense a cardiac signal~~ sensing a signal at the target tissue site with the operative element.

29. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 25, wherein the target tissue is cardiac tissue.

30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 29, wherein the cardiac tissue is ~~endocardial~~ epicardial tissue.

31. (Cancelled)

32. (New) The medical probe of claim 1, wherein the shroud is conically-shaped.

33. (New) The medical probe of claim 1, wherein the shroud is secured to an exterior of the operative element.

34. (New) The medical probe of claim 1, wherein the shroud is not secured to an exterior of the operative element.

35. (New) The medical probe of claim 1, wherein the shroud is configured to assume a collapsed configuration in the presence of an external compressive force.

36. (New) The medical probe of claim 35.

37. (New) The medical probe of claim 10, wherein the one or more vacuum ports are located on a distal edge of the wall.

38. (New) The medical probe of claim 10, wherein the one or more vacuum ports comprise a plurality of vacuum ports.

39. (New) The medical probe of claim 10, wherein the shroud further has one or more lumens extending along the wall in fluid communication with the one or more vacuum ports.

40. (New) The medical probe of claim 39, wherein the wall has one or more enlarged planar regions carrying the one or more lumens and one or more thinner planar regions between the one or more enlarged planar regions.

41. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the stabilizer comprises shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element.

42. (New) The method of claim 25, further comprising expanding the operative element prior to the operation of the operative element.

43. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein the shroud has one or more vacuum ports, and wherein the vacuum force is applied to the one or more vacuum ports.

44. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein the one or more vacuum ports are located on a distal edge of the shroud, the method further comprising placing the distal edge of the shroud into contact with the target tissue site while applying the vacuum force to the shroud.

45. (New) The method of claim 25, further comprising expanding the shroud prior to applying the vacuum force to the shroud.

46. (New) The method of claim 45, wherein the shroud expansion comprises releasing an external compressive force from the shroud.

47. (New) The method of claim 45, wherein the shroud expansion comprises expanding the operative element.